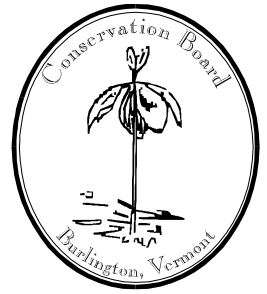


Burlington Conservation Board

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Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 1, 2013 – 5:30 pm
City Hall Lower Level – Planning and Zoning Conference Room

Attendance:

- **Board Members:** Scott Mapes (SM), Don Meals (DM), Matt Moore (MM), Jeff Severson (JS), Stephanie Young (SY)
- **Absent:** Will Flender (WF), Damon Lane (DL), Zoe Richards (ZR), Miles Waite (MW)
- **Public:** See items below
- **Staff:** Jay Appleton (Planning and Zoning)

MM, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Minutes of May 6, 2013.

JS offered three revisions to the May Minutes. [The June 3 meeting was cancelled.] A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by JS to accept the minutes of May 6 as revised. The motion passed 4-0-2.

Board Comment.

- Newly appointed Board member Stephanie Young in attendance. MM asked Board members to introduce themselves.

Public Comment.

- None.

Open Space Subcommittee Report.

The subcommittee chair reported that the committee did not meet in the past month. He deferred remaining discussion to items later in the meeting.

Organizational Meeting.

DM NOMINATED Matt Moore to continue as Chair, and Will Flender to continue as Vice Chair. SM seconded. The current chair and vice chair were reelected 5-0-1 (MM abstained).

Project Review:

13-0991CA/MA; 256-258 North Winooski Avenue (NMU, Ward 2) 256-262 North Winooski Avenue LLC

Marsh Gooding and Gates Gooding were in attendance for the item. The Gooding brothers presented their project, focusing on environmental issues. The project proposes to merge two parcels, demolish four existing buildings, and construct two detached buildings containing a total of 23 residential apartments and

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one ground floor commercial space, with associated site improvements. It was noted that Conservation Board member, Miles Waite, was the environmental consultant for the project. MW was not in attendance.

An environmental assessment determined that soils in a circular area, extending under the building sites, were contaminated with PCE. Remediation will utilize sub-slab depressurization, similar to a radon mitigation system.

Solar panel arrays on both buildings will be net-metered. The intent is to install the maximum number of solar panels possible.

The Goodings reviewed the building's insulation, wall construction, energy-efficient windows, and the heat-pump based heating system.

On-Street bicycle parking is proposed to exceed minimum standards.

Regarding stormwater management, currently the site has 80% impervious coverage. The site is served by combined sewer and stormwater pipes. The City's parking requirements are driving much of the paving design decisions, and a parking waiver has been requested. Marsh Gooding said that use of pervious pavement is not planned because it does not work well and requires excessive maintenance. DM responded that those claims are overblown.

Marsh Gooding said that the stormwater management design seeks to capture 50% of all runoff from the site for ground infiltration. SM felt that a higher percentage of runoff could be captured from the site, and that a better design goal is 100% of a one-year, 24-hour event. DM added that even narrow infiltration strips in the parking area are beneficial. The board noted that the proposed design is better than many other development proposals.

A MOTION was made by DM and seconded by JS:

The Board endorses the project at 256-262 North Winooski Avenue (13-0991CA/MA), and the positive steps taken to address energy efficiency, bike use, environmental cleanup, and stormwater management. Further, the Board recommends that the applicants explore increasing stormwater infiltration to beyond 50%. Further, the Board supports granting the requested parking waiver.

The motion passed 6-0-0.

Updates and Discussion:

Conservancy Legacy Fund Request for Waterfront Bike Path Improvements

Jesse Bridges, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, was in attendance for the item regarding resurfacing, stabilization, and widening the Waterfront Bike Path over a distance of 7.5 miles. The project will widen the bike path to eleven (11) feet with two-foot shoulders. Funding will come from a variety of sources; 40-60% will be from non-City sources. Mr. Bridges requested Board approval to grant \$36,000 from the Conservation Legacy Fund (CLF) for survey work and right-of-way acquisition planning.

Mr. Bridges distributed a four-page memo to the Board outlining the project scope, costs, funding strategy, and schedule, which is attached. The project upgrades were identified in the 2012 Burlington Bike Path Feasibility Study which will "satisfy current standards and improve safety, enhance user amenities, and raise its standing to that of a world class regional trail."

SM noted that the CLF is for land acquisition, and asked for clarification on how the grant request would be used. MM added that the project will upgrade an existing public facility, and that the CLF is not intended to be a maintenance fund.

Mr. Bridges explained that the extent of acquisition required to widen the bike path is not known at this time. Part of the existing path is on railroad property, and that of the Little Eagle Bay development. There are probably other locations where private land will need to be acquired to meet the project's goals. Thus the CLF funds would be used to quantify the extent of right-of-way acquisition required. He also noted that creating increased future connectivity to the Waterfront Bike Path will require substantial acquisition.

DM noted that the CLF is building up to a large sum, and suggested that it would be appropriate to use it on an important public resource such as the bike path. JS observed the project is unique in that it is not known how much land acquisition will be required. Finding that out is a necessary step, and so he felt the CLF should be applicable.

Concerning the planned endangered plant survey in the Urban Reserve, through which the Waterfront Bike Path passes, DM asked Mr. Bridges if it would be done. Mr. Bridges answered he did not know.

[MM left the meeting at 6:42 pm.]

The Board felt that land acquisition should be the main purpose of the Conservation Legacy Fund, and that repeated use of the fund for purposes other than direct purchase land is not its intent.

A MOTION was made by JS and seconded by SM:

The Board supports a grant of \$36,000 from the Conservation Legacy Fund to pay for one-third of the surveying costs and the process of identifying the extent of right-of-way acquisition.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

The Board also requested the Mr. Bridges forward to Scott Gustin information on how Board concerns for protection of rare plant communities along the bike path in the Urban Reserve will be addressed.

Draft Open Space Plan Review

Dan Cahill (Parks and Recreation), Amy Sheldon (Planning Consultant), and Lani Ravin (University of Vermont) were in attendance for the item.

Mr. Cahill summarized the plan update process, and public comment received via meetings and a web map-based tool. The draft Open Space Plan is on the City web site, and the June 12 version is slated for a Planning Commission Public Hearing in August.

Ms. Sheldon reviewed the draft plan in detail, focusing on:

- Open Space Inventory,
- Natural Community Types,
- Natural Community Types not Publically-Owned
- Trails,
- Green Infrastructure Inventory, and
- A series of GIS analyses to identify:
 - Prime Agricultural Soils
 - Prime Agricultural Soils not in Agricultural Use but are field, lawn, or transitional brush
 - Access Distance to Community Gardens for City Residents
 - Access Distance to Public Lands for City Residents, and
 - Access Distance to Publically-Owned Lake Champlain Waterfront for City Residents

Lani Ravin from the University of Vermont's Campus Planning Services was in attendance to discuss the University's concerns regarding prime agricultural soils mapping. While the University supports the goals and vision of the Open Space Plan, the University has significant reservations about prime agricultural soil

designations on the University campus in the Open Space Plan maps, and that these could limit future development options in land use regulatory processes. Ms. Ravin distributed a letter to the Conservation Board discussing these concerns.

The University requested amending the draft plan to “clearly state that this plan is a descriptive plan, which shows the existing situation of soils, ground cover and land use within the City of Burlington, but it is not a regulatory tool nor is it a proscriptive or prescriptive document.”

The University also requested specific language to clarify that the Open Space Plan should not be interpreted to mean “the University should not or shall not develop on undeveloped land with agricultural potential.”

Ms Ravin brought to the Board’s attention five areas on the University campus identified in the draft Open Space Plan as being prime agricultural soils with agricultural potential:

1. Centennial Field,
2. Trinity Campus,
3. US 2 and East Avenue Jug Handle,
4. Residential Green Areas in the South Campus, and
5. Green Areas in the Athletic Campus near Gutterson Fieldhouse.

Ms Ravin noted that Centennial Field has significant buried infrastructure, and there is extensive ledge in the Athletic campus, both rendering agriculture unsuitable. She also pointed out that the Soil Survey did not map soils in the City’s downtown, extending east to include the UVM main campus and South Prospect Street south to Cliff Street. The GIS analysis did not include a large part of the City and therefore it is somewhat arbitrary to single out parts of the UVM campus.

Her letter to the Board concludes, “The areas on the main campus [listed above] can certainly incorporate agricultural elements into facility and landscape design, but agricultural fields are not an appropriate mandate or recommendation for this urban campus, which must respond to the city’s requirements to develop a compact, urban campus that is walkable and minimizes neighborhood impact as well as minimizes pollution and congestion from transportation urban sprawl. The University needs to preserve its opportunities for future, thoughtful planned growth.”

The Board thanked Ms. Ravin for her comments.

Adjournment.

SM moved and DM seconded to adjourn the July meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.